

These natural disasters have tested our faith, and tragically, they have taken many lives. But they've also reminded us of the enduring power of the American people to overcome calamity and the commitment of our national community to help people rebuild their communities. There are some challenges no individual—indeed, no community—can handle alone. When faced with them, all of us have a responsibility to act through our National Government.

For more than 5 years, we've worked hard to make our Government smaller but more effective, with less redtape and more flexibility. Under the leadership of Vice President Gore, we have reinvented Government so that it better serves the American taxpayers, more effectively targets its efforts, and can respond more quickly to crises.

There's no better example of what this new kind of Government can do than FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency. I was Governor of a State that had more than its fair share of natural disasters for a dozen years. So when I became President, I vowed that the Federal Government would help communities respond to the ravages of nature. When I took office, disaster relief became one of our highest priorities. And our efforts were led by the very able person who had headed our effort in Arkansas when I was Governor, James Lee Witt.

With the Vice President's commitment and James Lee Witt as its driving force, FEMA has gone from being a disaster itself, in the eyes of many, to becoming a model of disaster relief, recognized around the world for its skill, speed, and dedication. It used to take hours of waiting in line to register for assistance; now it takes only minutes over the telephone. It used to take over a month to receive that assistance; now it takes about a week. And our "one stop shopping" disaster recovery centers are helping people to rebuild their lives, their businesses, and their homes more quickly than ever.

We know every dollar spent on disaster preparedness and prevention saves two or more dollars in future costs. That's why FEMA also has launched Project Impact, building disaster-resistant communities through partnerships with the private sector, volunteer groups, community organizations.

FEMA has already started seven of these pilot projects, and we're working to put a Project Impact community in every State by this fall.

I thank the dedicated public servants at the reinvented FEMA and other agencies for restoring citizen confidence in their Government simply by doing their jobs well.

One year after the flood waters receded, the work of rebuilding communities continues in Grand Forks. And FEMA is still there to help, just as it is there to help in tornado-ravaged Arkansas, Tennessee, Kentucky, Alabama, Georgia, and Florida.

In the worst of situations, we see the best in our citizens and our public servants. As I work here in Chile with other democratic leaders from our hemisphere at the second Summit of the Americas to bring the benefits of the modern world to all our people, it's reassuring to know that old-fashioned American values of neighborly care and concern will be a constant in our lives, no matter what good fortune or new trials the 21st century brings.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:30 p.m. on April 17 at the Hyatt Hotel in Santiago, Chile, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 18.

Statement on the Death of Terry Sanford

April 18, 1998

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of the death of Terry Sanford.

His long and distinguished career of public service as Governor, President of Duke University, and U.S. Senator helped build the New South and served as an inspiration to me and an entire generation of Americans. He stood for civil rights, education for all, and progressive economic development. His work and his influence literally changed the face and future of the South, making him one of the most influential Americans of the last 50 years. Most important, he was a wonderful man who fought for the right things in the right way.

I was lucky to count him as a friend. Our thoughts and prayers are with Margaret Rose, Terry Jr., Betsee, and his entire family.

Closing Remarks at the Summit of the Americas in Santiago

April 19, 1998

President Frei; fellow leaders of the Americas; First Ladies; distinguished Presidents of Senate, Chamber of Deputies, Supreme Court; members of the diplomatic corps; ladies and gentlemen of the Americas: Let me say first to you, Mr. President—and I know I speak for all of us here—we thank you and Mrs. Frei and your entire team for the warmth of your welcome, the wonder of your country, and the genuine leadership you have brought to this Summit of the Americas. Thank you very much.

At our first summit in 1994, we agreed on a common vision of a democratic, prosperous, peaceful, united hemisphere for the 21st century. We also formulated a comprehensive agenda to help us to realize that vision—an agenda to strengthen our democracies, tear down trade barriers, improve our people's quality of life.

Our journey from Miami to Santiago, as we have often said, was from words to deeds. Still, for all our progress, we all admit that too many of our citizens have not yet seen their own lives improved as a result of our participation as free nations in the global economy. Therefore, we have committed ourselves here to a second stage of reforms designed to bring the benefits of freedom and free enterprise to ordinary citizens throughout the Americas.

As was the truth in Miami, it is so here today: The real work of Santiago begins as we leave. And until we meet again in Canada, we must work every day to keep the commitments we have made to each other and to our people.

First, we must continue to stand fast for democracy for our entire hemisphere, with no holdouts and no backsliders. We must support the integrity of the electoral process. We welcomed and participated in the restoration of democracy in Haiti. We supported its preservation in Paraguay. We now must support the OAS and CARICOM as they support the people of Guyana in the integrity of their electoral process.

We must support our new special rapporteur on freedom of expression and

work to prevent violence against journalists; get our new hemispheric justice system up and running; implement the OAS Illegal Firearms Convention to help to stop firearms from falling into the wrong hands; adopt the laws necessary to make our unprecedented anticorruption convention a reality. And most important, we must move aggressively to establish our alliance against drugs, so that we will have a more genuinely collective effort to protect our people against narcotrafficking and drug abuse, violence and organized crime.

Second, we must continue to bring the free economies of the Americas together. Today we launched comprehensive negotiations for a free-trade area of the Americas and vowed to make concrete progress toward that goal by the year 2000, including greater transparency in government procurement and banking operations, a commitment to free trade in cyberspace, and steps to facilitate business, such as customs coordination.

And as we improve the climate for business contracts, we know we must also strengthen the social contract. The civil society committee we have established is designed to give all the voices of society the opportunity to be heard in shaping the new free-trade area of the Americas. We want more trade and better working conditions, more growth and a cleaner environment.

The entrepreneurs of the information age can prosper in a way that increases opportunities for all who are willing to work hard. And we can reap the benefits of economic change and meet the challenge of climate change.

Finally, we have made it our mission to give our people the tools they must have to succeed in the new economy: opening the doors of learning to all our children; doing more to lift our people out of poverty, supported by billions of dollars in new lending commitments for microenterprise and health care from the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank.

By the time we meet again, we should resolve that all our small entrepreneurs, especially our women, should have access to the loans they need to get their businesses off the ground; that poor urban and rural citizens should be able to gain titles to their